



HIGH CHOLESTEROL

Having an excessively high level of lipids in your blood (hyperlipidemia) can have a serious effect on your health as it increases your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

Bad Cholesterol (LDL – low density lipoprotein) accounts for 70% of the cholesterol in our blood and acts to carry cholesterol from your liver to the cells that need it. **If there is too much cholesterol for the cells to use, this can cause a harmful build-up in your blood.**

Good Cholesterol (HDL – high density lipoprotein) carries cholesterol away from the cells and back to the liver for excretion from the body via the gastro-intestinal system. There it is either broken down or passed from the body as a waste product. **The lower your HDL levels, the greater your risk of heart disease.**

Your Body Needs Cholesterol To:

- make up the structure of the membrane (outer layer) of every cell in the body
- insulate nerve fibers
- make hormones, such as sex hormones and steroid hormones
- make bile acids, which are needed for the digestion and absorption of fats

Risks of High Cholesterol

High cholesterol is not a disease but increases your risk of serious conditions such as:

- coronary heart disease, caused by atherosclerosis (narrowing of the arteries)
- stroke
- mini-stroke (transient ischemic attack or TIA)

Triglycerides are the fats you use for energy and come from the fatty foods you eat. There is usually an association between triglycerides and raised cholesterol. Being overweight and drinking too much alcohol can push up triglyceride levels.

The optimal total cholesterol target is less than 200 mg/dL with a good cholesterol level (HDL) above 60 mg/dL and a bad cholesterol of less than 100 mg/dL. A total cholesterol level of 200-239 is considered borderline and a total cholesterol of over 240 mg/dL is considered high. A desirable Triglyceride level is below 150 mg/dL.

“A person with high blood cholesterol has more than twice the risk of coronary heart disease as someone whose cholesterol is below 200 mg/dL.”

| Total Cholesterol | Category |
|---------------------|--|
| Less than 200 mg/dL | Desirable level that puts you at lower risk for coronary heart disease. A cholesterol level of 200 mg/dL or higher raises your risk. |
| 200 to 239 mg/dL | Borderline high |
| 240 mg/dL and above | High blood cholesterol. A person with this level has more than twice the risk of coronary heart disease as someone whose cholesterol is below 200 mg/dL. |

Source: American Heart Association

Who Should Be Tested?

All adults age 20 and over should have a fasting test for cholesterol once every 5 years. It is also particularly important to have your cholesterol checked if:

- you have been diagnosed with coronary heart disease, suffered a stroke/mini-stroke or you have leg artery disease
- you are over 40
- you have a family history of early cardiovascular disease (for example, if your father or brother developed heart disease or had a heart attack or stroke before the age of 55, or if your mother or sister had these conditions before the age of 65)
- a close family member has a cholesterol-related condition, such as familial hypercholesterolaemia (inherited high cholesterol)
- you are overweight or obese
- you have high blood pressure or diabetes
- you have another medical condition such as a kidney condition, an underactive thyroid gland or an inflamed pancreas (pancreatitis). These conditions can cause increased levels of cholesterol or triglycerides



Support From the Life Line Screening Community

Visit the Life Line Screening Facebook page to share your experiences. You may even pick up some handy tips from others looking to reduced their cholesterol levels too!

Sign up for the monthly eNewsletter online too for news, offers and useful info!

Treating High Cholesterol

If you have been diagnosed with high cholesterol, the first method of treatment will usually involve making some changes to your diet (adopting a low-fat diet) and doing plenty of regular exercise.

If your cholesterol level has not dropped after a period of time, your physician may suggest cholesterol-lowering medication.

A healthy diet includes foods from all of the different food groups:

- carbohydrates (cereals, whole grain bread, potatoes, rice and pasta)
- proteins (lean meat, beans and fish)
- unsaturated fats
- fruit and vegetables (at least five portions a day)

You should try to avoid or cut down on the following foods, which are rich in saturated fat:

- fatty cuts of meat and meat products
- butter and vegetable shortening
- cream, sour cream, and ice cream
- cheese, particularly hard cheese
- cakes and cookies
- coconut oil, coconut cream and palm oil

Switching saturated fats to mono-unsaturated fats such as olive oil can actually lower total cholesterol while preserving the important HDL cholesterol.

“When too much bad cholesterol circulates in the blood, it can slowly build up on the inner walls of the arteries that feed the heart and the brain.”

Studies overwhelmingly show that it is perfectly possible to stop and even to reverse the build up of fatty deposits within artery walls. You can help prevent getting high blood cholesterol by eating a healthy, balanced diet that is low in saturated fat.

For More Information Visit:

http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Cholesterol/AboutCholesterol/What-Your-Cholesterol-Levels-Mean_UCM_305562_Article.jsp

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/cholesterol-levels/CL00001>

Please remember these are general guidelines only and you should always discuss with your primary care doctor.

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www.LifeLineScreening.com

Make an Appointment:

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